

# PLT for Seedlings:

Wisconsin Project Learning Tree (PLT)  
Early Childhood Program

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## Children's Literature Bibliography

Exploring nature engages all of a child's senses, inviting him or her to touch, smell, listen and look at the wonders of the natural world. These vital sensory-motor experiences in the early childhood years lead to the development of a child's imagination and curiosity—an important motivator for life-long learning. Early experiences in the out-of-doors also have the potential for shaping life-long attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior toward the environment.

The recommended books in this bibliography focus on five themes for early childhood environmental education:

- ◆ The Shape of Things: Shapes in the natural and built world
- ◆ To Be a Tree: Tree parts and their functions
- ◆ Adopt a Tree: Tree observations through the seasons
- ◆ Trees as Habitats: Trees as homes for wildlife
- ◆ Sounds Around: Sounds of the forest and neighborhood

You can easily integrate the books into your existing curriculum, or use them in conjunction with the WI Project Learning Tree Early Childhood Activity Guide and Music/Movement CD. The PLT materials integrate nature exploration, literature, art, music and movement, assessment opportunities, and a snack into over 25 nature-based learning experiences. The activity guide and compact disc are available through educator workshops. To locate a workshop in your area, go to the Teacher's Workshop Calendar on the DNR's EEK! Web site at:  
[www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/teacher/calendar.htm](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/eeek/teacher/calendar.htm)



## The Shape of Things

We depend on all of our senses to gather impressions of our environment. The literature selections below draw on the sense of sight to explore the diversity of shapes in the natural and built world.

***Animal Houses*** by Aileen Fisher

Bowmar: 1973

ISBN: 0837208599

Discover the joys of nature observation and exploration through the eyes of a child. Through rhyme, this book compares the square houses of people with the rounded dwellings of a variety of animals. For ages 3-6.

***Autumn Leaves*** by Ken Robbins

Scholastic Inc.: 1998

ISBN: 0590298798

The author invites children to learn about the characteristics of thirteen different trees, focusing on the shapes of their leaves. For ages 4-7.

***Eye Spy Shapes*** by Debbie MacKinnon

Charlesbridge: 2000

ISBN: 0881061352

Vivid, multicolored photographs invite the reader to peek through the peepholes to discover five simple shapes: a square, triangle, circle, star, and rectangle. For ages 3-7.

***Look What I Did With a Leaf!*** by Morteza E. Sohi

Scholastic Inc.: 1993

ISBN: 0802782159

The author demonstrates creative art ideas for making nature creatures out of differently shaped leaves. Includes a basic leaf field guide. For ages 3-6.

***Nature Spy*** by Shelley Rotner and Ken Kreisler

Macmillan: 1992

ISBN: 0027778851

Photographs portray a young girl as she takes a close-up look at nature's wonders—examining an acorn on a branch, the lines on a leaf, and the golden eye of a frog. For ages 3-6.

***Shapes, Shapes, Shapes*** by Tana Hoban

Greenwillow Books: 1986

ISBN: 0688147402

Photographs of familiar objects exhibiting round and angular shapes enliven this colorful picture book. For ages 2-5.

***So Many Circles, So Many Squares*** by Tana Hoban

Greenwillow Books: 1998

ISBN: 0688151655

This brightly illustrated picture book reveals circles and squares in the natural and manmade world. For ages 3-6.

***The Shape of Me and Other Stuff*** by Dr. Seuss

Random House: 1997

ISBN: 0679886311

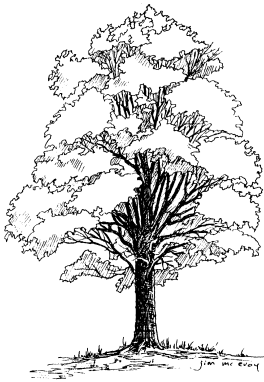
Rhyme and silhouette encourage children to consider the shape of bees, beans, flowers, and big machines. For ages 2-5.

***The Shape of Things*** by Dayle Ann Dodds

Candlewick Press: 1994

ISBN: 1564022242

Bright paper-collage artwork reveals how six basic shapes come together to form houses, boats, and ferris wheels. "A square is just a square, / Until you add a roof, / Two windows and a door, / Then it's much, much more!" For ages 3-5.



## To Be a Tree

From a tree's roots to its crown, each part of a tree plays a role in helping it to function. The literature selections listed below will help children gain an awareness of a tree's structure and functions.

***Are Trees Alive?*** by Debbie S. Miller

Walker & Company: 2002

ISBN: 0802788017

This delightful book poetically compares the parts of a tree and the parts of a child's body. For ages 4-8.

***Franklin Plants a Tree*** by Paulette Bourgeois and

Brenda Clark

Scholastic Inc.: 2001

ISBN: 0606211969

Franklin and his friends plant saplings on Earth Day. With water and lots of love, Franklin's tree begins to grow. For ages 4-8.

***Growing Vegetable Soup*** by Lois Ehlert

Scholastic Inc.: 1987.

ISBN: 0152325751

Vibrant graphics depict a father and children as they plant, water, weed and watch vegetable seeds grow in their garden. At harvest time, they prepare a delicious homemade vegetable soup (the recipe is included). For ages 4-8.

***How a Seed Grows*** by Helen J. Jordon

Harper Collins Publishers: 1992

ISBN: 0060201045

A how-to book that describes and illustrates the steps in growing a bean plant. For ages 4-8.

***I Am a Leaf*** by Jean Marzollo

Scholastic: 1998

ISBN: 0590641204

A simple introduction to the life cycle and functions of a leaf. For ages 4-8.

***Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*** by Lois Ehlert

Harcourt Brace Javanovich: 1991

ISBN: 0152661972

A child describes the seed-to-sapling growth of a maple tree. Bright, cutout collage illustrations enhance the story. Information is included on planting and caring for maple trees. For ages 4-8.

***The Apple Pie Tree*** by Zoe Hall

Scholastic Inc.: 1996

ISBN: 0590623826

Colorful collage illustrations follow each season as an apple tree grows leaves, blossoms, and produces little green apples. Fall is an especially exciting time of the year because the ripe apples are ready to eat.

For ages 4-7.



## Adopt a Tree

By adopting a tree, children can sharpen their observation skills

and gain a greater awareness and appreciation of their local environment. Suggested literature selections include:

***A Tree for All Seasons*** by Robin Bernard

National Geographic Society: 2001

ISBN: 0792294270

Beautiful photographs and simple text depict the seasonal changes of a sugar maple tree. For ages 4-8.

***A Tree Is Nice*** by Janice May Udry

Harper & Row: 1956

ISBN: 0064431479

An older book with a simple message, *A Tree Is Nice* describes the importance of trees to people and wildlife. Most children will be able to relate personal experiences to the story. For ages 3-7.

***Fall Leaves Fall*** by Zoe Hall

Scholastic Inc.: 2000

ISBN: 0590100793

Bright collage illustrations depict the joy of autumn as two siblings try to catch falling leaves, kick them, compare their shapes, rake them into a pile and jump in them. For ages 3-7.

***Have You Seen Trees?*** by Joanne Oppenheim.

Scholastic: 1995

ISBN: 0590466917

The rhythmic language and lush paintings of this joyful poem celebrate the varied characteristics of trees--from young to old, short to tall, and throughout the seasons. For ages 3-7.

***Hello, Tree!*** by Joanne Ryder

Lodestar Books: 1991

ISBN: 0525673105

Through realistic illustrations and descriptive text, the author encourages children to use their senses to experience the unique properties of trees. For ages 5-9.

***Mighty Tree*** by Dick Gackenbach

Harcourt Brace: 1992

ISBN: 0152005196

*Mighty Tree* follows the life cycle of three seeds as they grow into mature trees. Each of the trees is special to nature and people in different ways and for a variety of reasons. For ages 3-7.

***My Favorite Tree; Terrific Trees of North America***

by Diane Iverson

Dawn Publications: 1999

ISBN: 1883220939

This book celebrates the joy children feel as they interact with their favorite tree in their own unique way. For older children, separate text is included featuring an overview of each tree's traits, associated wildlife companions, and role in the web of life. For ages 4-12.

***Old Elm Speaks*** by Kristine O'Connell George

Clarion Books: 1998

ISBN: 0395876117

Through enchanting paintings and imaginative, humorous language the author offers a delightfully original look at trees. This book captures trees in various circumstances and throughout the season in short poems, free verse, and haiku. For ages 5 and up.



***Sky Tree: Seeing Science through Art***

by Thomas Locker

HarperCollins: 1995

ISBN: 0060248831

Magnificent paintings and lyrical text invite children to experience the life of a tree and its relationship to the sky. Reflection questions at the bottom of each page explore a child's observations and feelings about nature. For ages 5-9.

***The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree*** by Gail Gibbons

Harcourt Brace & Company: 1991

ISBN: 0152712453

A fun story that depicts a fruit tree's seasonal changes. Arnold and his family enjoy the gifts of his special apple tree in every season, from spring's beautiful blossoms to fall's tasty apples. A recipe for apple pie is included. For ages 3-7.

***The Tree in the Wood*** by Christopher Manson

ISBN: 1558581928.

Based on a traditional folk song, the lyrics of this chant explore the intertwining themes of growth, change, and the interrelationships in the natural world. Children will request that you read this book again so they can join in by repeating the green-grass refrain. For ages 4-9.

***Trees*** by Harry Behn

Henry Holt and Company: 1992

ISBN: 080501926

With simple, rhythmic, melodic text, this beautifully illustrated picture book encourages young children to look more closely at trees. For ages 3-7.



## Trees as Habitats

From their leafy branches to their tangled roots, trees provide a habitat for a host of plants and animals. Literature selections related to this theme include:

***A Chipmunk Song*** by Joanne Ryder

Lodestar Books: 1989

ISBN: 0525672842

Joanne Ryder's unique books offer numerous opportunities for simulation activities as children pretend to be snails, chipmunks, caterpillars, and butterflies. This book features a lyrical description of a chipmunk as it goes about its activities in summer, prepares for winter, and settles in for spring. For ages 4-7.

***A Log's Life*** by Wendy Pfeffer

Simon and Schuster: 1997

ISBN: 0689806361

This realistically illustrated book for older children introduces the lifecycle of a tree. As an oak tree falls to the ground and decays, it provides a home for mushrooms, porcupines, salamanders and many other organisms. Children will enjoy searching for and finding the organisms in the artwork. This book can easily be adapted as a picture book for younger children. For ages 5 and up.

***A Tree for Me*** by Nancy Van Laan

Random House: 2000

ISBN: 0679893849

A child climbs five different trees, looking for a place to hide. Each tree reveals an increasing number of animals already in residence. The author uses repetition and counting to explore the inhabitants of a tree. Children ages 3-7 will enjoy reading along with the engaging text.

***Good-Night Owl!*** by Pat Hutchins

MacMillan: 1972

ISBN: 0689713711

A humorous look at an owl's daytime attempt to sleep in a tree shared with a variety of noisy wildlife. A fun, imaginative story for a class simulation. For ages 3-8.

***In a Tree*** by David M. Schwartz

Gareth Stevens Publications: 1999

ISBN: 0836822455

Children will delight in discovering the inhabitants of a tree in this colorful mystery book. Each organism's anatomy is revealed through up-close observations of one feature (What could it be?) and then a large-scale photograph of the entire organism. The simple text and photographs reveal a caterpillar, raccoon, owl, squirrel, yellow warbler, white pine, and oak tree. For ages 4-8.



***In the Woods, In the Meadow, In the Sky***

by Aileen Fisher

Scribner: 1965

ISBN: 0684126524

Naturalist and author Aileen Fisher captures the sense of wonder children experience while discovering the diversity of nature's inhabitants. This book features a bright collection of nature poems offering abundant opportunities for creative movement activities and finger-plays. For ages 3-8.

***Our Tree*** by Herbert H. Wong and Matthew F. Vessel

Addison-Wesley: 1969

ISBN: 0201087235

The authors of *Our Tree* use observations in and around a tree to show the different ways animals and insects use trees. A good introductory book, useful for sharpening observation skills before an outdoor excursion. For ages 5-9.

***The Gift of the Tree*** by Alvin Tresselt

Lothrop, Lee & Shephard Books: 1972, 1992

ISBN: 0688106846

Exquisite paintings capture the beauty and power of a 100-year-old oak tree. The accompanying text follows the life and death of the tree as birds, squirrels, termites, raccoons, and woodpeckers make the tree their home. Suitable for ages 5-9, and as a picture book for young children.

***The Mitten*** by Jan Brett

G.P. Putnam's Sons: 1989

ISBN: 039921920X

When a young boy drops his mitten in the snow a variety of woodland animals find it and crawl inside. A warm, visually appealing, and humorous picture book. For ages 4-8.

***Tree Trunk Traffic*** by Bianco Lavies

Dutton: 1989

ISBN: 0525444955

Text and photographs portray the animal life present on a 70-year-old maple tree. Suitable for ages 3-8, and as a picture book for younger children.

**Sounds Around**

The natural and man-made world around us contains a diversity of sounds, from the whirl, clatter, and roar of technology to the peeps, barks, and cries of forest wildlife. The literature selections listed below encourage children to explore and listen to the symphony of sounds found in the out-of-doors.



***A Walk in the Woods*** by Caroline Arnold

Silver Burdett Press: 1995

ISBN: 067168661

Colorful illustrations and text describe some of the animals and plants that live in the forest. For ages 4-8.

***Counting on the Woods*** by George Ella Lyon  
DK Publishing, New York: 1998  
ISBN: 0789424800

A fun book that uses rhyme to describe and count woodland nature objects. For ages 4-8.

***My Night Forest*** by Roy Owen  
Simon & Schuster: 1994  
ISBN: 0027690059

This story takes children on a nighttime journey deep into the forest and into the lives of five animals: an owl, wolf, bear, deer, and mouse. The story explores what these creatures hear, see, smell, taste, and touch in the night. For ages 2-5.

***Nature Walk*** by Douglas Florian  
Greenwillow Books: 1989  
ISBN: 068808266

Young children will enjoy discovering the plants and animals of the forest in this simple picture book. The author uses a word or short phrase of description for each two-page spread. For ages 2-5.

***The Listening Walk*** by Paul Showers  
HarperCollins Publishers, New York: 1999  
ISBN: 069049663

A young girl takes a quiet walk with her father and identifies the different sounds they hear—such as shoes on a dirt path and crickets in the grass. For ages 2-5.

***Life in the Forest*** by Eileen Curran  
Troll Associates: 1985  
ISBN: 0816704473

Children can find the forest inhabitants in this colorfully illustrated book for young readers. For ages 2-5.

***The Other Way to Listen*** by Bryd Baylor  
Charles Scribner's Sons: 1978  
ISBN: 0684156512

A mystical story to encourage quiet reflection and a kinship with nature. A young man is eager to learn how to hear the hills sing and the seeds grow. The elderly man in the story is happy to share his wisdom. This story will spark a child's imagination while encouraging him/her to relate their own nature experiences. Good as a read-aloud book for ages 5-9 (the illustrations are abstract).

***The Quiet Way Home*** by Bonny Becker  
Henry Holt & Company, New York: 1995  
ISBN: 0805035303

A little girl and her grandfather take the "quiet" way home from school, taking time to enjoy the sounds of the honeybee "buzzing," the black bird "scolding," and the grasshopper "whirring." For ages 2-5.

***The Way to Wyatt's House*** by Nancy White Carlstrom  
Walker & Company, New York: 2000  
ISBN: 0802787401

Two children discover an array of sounds and sights as they walk to their friend's house. Clear and colorful pictures enhance the script as the children "crunch" through autumn leaves and "swish" through the long grass. For ages 2-5.



WDNR PLT/WILD/WET  
101 S. Webster, CE/8  
Madison, WI 53707-7921  
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